

MINUTES  
Liberal Arts Core Committee  
September 14, 2007  
Student Involvement and Activities Center Meeting Room,  
Plaza level, Maucker Union

Present: Maria Basom, Ken Baughman, Adam Bentley, Jerry Caswell, Donna Hoffman, Siobahn Morgan, Ron O'Meara, Jean Neibauer, Frank Thompson, Lori VanHooreweghe, Donna Vinton

I. Call to Order:

Morgan called the meeting to order at 8:02 A.M.

II. Approval of the minutes

The minutes from the September 7, 2007 meeting were reviewed. A few minor corrections were pointed out and these were included. O'Meara moved to approve the minutes as amended, Bentley seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

III. Announcements

- A. Morgan mentioned that data was produced about courses with over 100 students from fall 2006, and the corresponding failure rates – the number of students getting an “F”. The analysis included all courses across campus and had failure percentages ranging from 0% to 16%. Virtually all courses in the LAC were on the list, generally at the 10% or lower failure rate. Efforts are being made to provide students with help in these courses at the college and department level. Neibauer suggested that an early alert system might help students get assistance earlier rather than at mid-term when “D” and “F” notices are sent out. This could be used for not only LAC courses but also major courses. There were various discussions about student support and advising services, and other aspects of the first year student experience. Basom suggested that a “Cornerstone” course could provide some help to new students, in not only academic areas but other student support areas
- B. Morgan mentioned that more “buzz” has been generated about Capstone and she was hopeful that more new Capstone course proposals will come forward. For spring semester approximately 13 sections of the new Capstone courses are being scheduled. Morgan mentioned that she will try to increase the sections of ETS (820:140) for the spring to help with the backlog.
- C. The University Curriculum Committee will start meeting starting Wednesday September 19 with an organizational meeting at first and later meetings will cover the various packets from the colleges. There is some confusion about the order that the packages are supposed to traverse through committee-land, whether they are supposed to go through the LAC first or the UCC first. Either way the packages that deal with the LAC will have to be examined by the LAC committee. Morgan will look at the packets.

#### IV. New Business

- A. Morgan distributed the Capstone course proposal from East (Computer Science) for the course “Public Policy and Computing Technology”. The course was previously taught under the ETS course designation. Since this course missed the curriculum cycle, it will eventually have to be approved in the future. The current policy is that these courses can be taught beyond the normal range of “experimental” courses until the next curriculum cycle. There was also discussion about the use of a missile defense system in the course, but that was later discovered to be a formatting error.

#### V. Old Business

The draft of the Capstone management document was discussed. Various areas of the document were addressed. It was suggested that the instructions for course approval be revised and streamlined. Also it would be logical to include the Capstone criteria – this should be right at the start of the document.

The continued offering of courses was discussed. Some departments are interested in having the course as part of their department (have it listed with a departmental prefix number), while other departments are not interested in doing this and would rather have the course listed under a generic prefix number. If a course is approved and then not taught, it would eventually be removed from the catalog – this is true for any course, not just LAC or Capstone courses.

There was discussion of courses that are being used by majors or have graduate students in them, since some have “g” credit or are electives for majors. It appeared that the logical time to examine courses in the category would be during the entire category review. At that time both courses that are only for Capstone credit and the ones that are used for majors would be reviewed.

There was also discussion of having special on-line listings of all LAC courses on the registrar’s website – currently only the open sections are available. Sometimes students are interested in courses that are closed and would like to see if particular sections are available.

The question of how the courses are staffed was discussed. This may occur when a course is proposed by an individual and other faculty from across the university may have an interest in teaching the course. Is that possible? Who should determine who can or cannot teach these courses? This may be an issue for the courses that have the generic designation of CAP:1XX. During the regular review of Capstone over the academic year, it might be best to have syllabi available to assess if the course objectives are being fulfilled by faculty who teach the course. This is particularly important for courses that are taught by faculty who were not involved in the creation of the course. At this point it is only possible for the LAC Committee or Coordinator to *suggest* staffing changes for courses – but if a department wants a particular faculty member or adjunct to teach a course, there isn’t much that can be done about it.

There was also discussion of the category review process – how frequently will courses be assessed, what will the category review process guidelines be for Capstone? These issues need to be addressed.

Another issue is enrollment, particularly for courses that are populated by graduate students (preventing more undergraduates from enrolling). This is primarily in the Capstone courses that existed before the new model was approved and have departmental designations. Majors can also use these courses for electives, and is that appropriate (since the students are not exposed to a broader range of topics/issues).

Morgan will revise the management document and present it to the committee at a later date.

## VI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn was made by Caswell, seconded by O'Meara. Motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 9:20 a.m.

Next Meeting – 8:00 AM, September 21, 2007 – in the SIAC meeting room.

Respectfully submitted,  
Siobahn Morgan  
LAC website: <http://www.uni.edu/vpaa/lac/index.shtml>